
Wisconsin Forestry Notes

March 2004

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

Read the gubernatorial proclamation declaring 2004 as the "Year of Wisconsin Forestry" online at www.wisconsinforestry.org

"Year of Wisconsin Forestry" is underway

The "Year of Wisconsin Forestry" kicked-off with a ceremony at the State Capitol on January 22 and will continue throughout the State during 2004, concluding with the lighting of the State Capitol holiday tree in December. The year marks the centennial of the state's forestry program as well as landmark anniversaries of a number of forestry-related organizations in Wisconsin. In proclaiming 2004 as the "Year of Wisconsin Forestry", Governor Doyle seeks to promote a broader understanding of the role forests play in the lives of Wisconsin and her people. The special year is showcasing the many aspects of sustainable forestry today as well as honoring the vision and hard work of those who re-established the 16-million acre resource over the past 100 years. You're invited to join this celebration of Wisconsin forestry! To discuss project ideas, contact [Kirsten Held](#) at 608-264-6036. An up-to-date listing of events is online at www.wisconsinforestry.org

A certification assessment of Wisconsin's State Forests has been completed. Now your comments are sought regarding whether DNR should move ahead with certification on the half a million acres classified as State Forests in Wisconsin. Read more about the issue and submit your comments at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/certification/index.html>

Will our State Forests become certified?

Over the past ten years, the DNR Forestry program has been studying the issue of forest certification. This is a process in which a forest landowner undergoes an audit of their practices by a third party organization. If the forest practices of the landowner meet the standards for long-term sustainability identified by the third party organization, then that organization will "certify" that the forest is "well managed" and that wood products originating from that forest were grown and harvested in a way that will assure long-term sustainability for biological, social and economic benefits.

Because large purchasers of Wisconsin products are seeking certified materials, Gov. Doyle felt that the time was right to further explore this growing trend and directed DNR to assess State Forest opportunities. The DNR then contracted for a full certification assessment of the State Forest program by the two primary North American forest certification systems: the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI).

State officials note that, while only a small fraction of the raw materials needed by Wisconsin forest industries come from the DNR-administered State Forests (and just five percent of Wisconsin's forest land is encompassed in the State Forests), it is important for the State to set an example and help build the critical mass of certified products that are needed. In addition to the growing business-to-business market demand for certified materials, verification from third-party auditors can help assure the public that we are caring responsibly for the land.

A full assessment of the State Forest Program and preliminary assessment of the County Forest and Managed Forest Law programs were recently completed. The FSC-accredited auditing firm has offered certification to DNR's State Forest properties. The SFI auditing firm likewise found requirements for SFI certification are met.

However, full certification of the State Forests would not become effective until after the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board approves commitment to the programs. Therefore, DNR is seeking feedback from you regarding State Forest certification prior to making a recommendation to the Natural Resources Board. More details about the issue as well as the opportunity to submit comments can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/certification/index.html>

Comment also on statewide forest plan

A draft statewide forest plan, crafted with extensive public input over the past two years, is now available for review and comment online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/look/assessment/draftplan.htm>

You can help finalize a statewide vision for the 16-million-acre forest resource in Wisconsin. Review the draft plan online and submit your comments at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/look/assessment/draftplan.htm>

The draft plan is an effort to reach a commonly-held vision for Wisconsin's forest resources and develop a strategy to achieve that vision. The plan includes goals, objectives and a partial list of example actions suggested by stakeholders and forestry professionals to achieve the common vision. State forestry planners are seeking comment on the goals and objectives, as well as ideas for additional actions to carry out all aspects of the plan.

The Wisconsin Council on Forestry, an advisory group appointed by Gov. Doyle, will sponsor a conference in November to prioritize the action list. More information on the conference will be issued as details are finalized.

"It is particularly appropriate to be in the final stages of creating this statewide forest plan in 2004, the *Year of Wisconsin Forestry*," says DNR Chief State Forester Paul DeLong. "One hundred years ago the state hired its first professional forester, E.M. Griffith, to apply modern, science-based forest management principles to a largely unmanaged and thoroughly exploited forest resource. This was the beginning of sustainable forest management in Wisconsin – a concept we remain dedicated to today."

Urban Forestry award winners named

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council, an advisory body to the Department of Natural Resources, recognized several communities, partnerships and businesses for their contributions to urban forestry at the annual Wisconsin Urban Forestry Conference in February:

- The "Project Partnership" award went to a nine-member coalition that convinced downtown Black River Falls business owners to replace ailing storefront trees with new ones, making a more welcome place to shop and providing essential shade in the summer and a comfortable community atmosphere to linger.
- Greenville (population 7,364) received the "Innovations in Urban Forestry" award for their community forestry marketing plan.
- A second "Innovations in Urban Forestry" award went to the village of Denmark for the creation of a tree and sculpture project completed in 2002.
- The Chilton Tree Board won the "Distinguished Service" award for its 12 years of dedication to maintaining their trees.
- The "Long-term Partnership" award went to Murphy Oil Company of Superior recognizing their "Tree Tales" urban forestry education program for elementary students, an annual sapling giveaway and tree planting along company site boulevards.

In all, Wisconsin has more than 2 million acres of urban forest. Of the 687 cities, villages and urban towns in Wisconsin, 290 have an urban forestry program of some kind.

For more details about the 2004 award winners, visit: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/news/on/2004/on20040210.htm#art4>

Urban forests help sustain Wisconsin communities and contribute to residents' sense of place. They contribute to the social and environmental health of the community and to the economy, and they increase individual property values. The 2004 Urban Forestry award winners championed projects to maintain this valuable resource and help their local community members better understand the importance of the urban forest.

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